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ABSTRACT

School-based management (SBM) is a strategy to decentralize decision-making authority to the individual school site. This document describes the principles of SBM, of which devolution of authority is the fundamental concept. Local control and shared decision-making are manifested in five educational operations: goals, budget, personnel, curriculum and instruction, and organizational structures. This report describes changes in the roles of state policymakers, district administrators, principals, and teachers. The five conditions necessary to facilitate SBM include readiness, time, professional development, adequate material resources, and support. In addition, support from all educational stakeholders, from good working structures and from public legitimization are all necessary for the successful implementation of SBM. In conclusion, school-based management: (1) is a difficult intervention to get under way; (2) creates additional administrative burdens for teachers; (3) offers hope for improving certain dimensions of schooling; and (4) does not, in and of itself, lead to improvement in student learning. (LMI)

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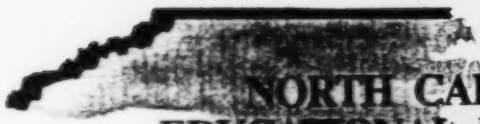

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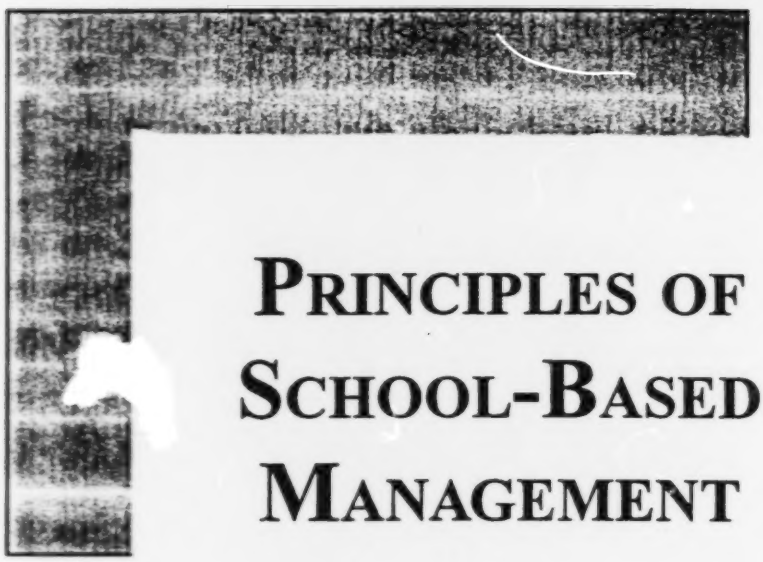

PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

School of Education
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FEBRUARY, 1994

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Executive Summary

School-based management (SBM) is a strategy to decentralize decision making authority to the individual school site. This initiative is a part of the larger school restructuring movement which began around 1980 based on the following assumptions about reform: educational problems are attributable more to the failure of the system of schooling than to the shortcoming of individual educators; empowerment (of students, teachers, and parents) is a more effective tool than prescription; and bottom-up, school-based solution strategies will lead to more satisfying results than will top-down, mandated ones.

Devolution of authority is the fundamental concept in SBM. Under this system of governance, schools become deregulated from the district office and gain control and responsibility over their own affairs. Decision-making is shared at the local school site between teachers, parents, other community members, and sometimes students. Typically, local control and shared decision making are manifested in five educational operations: goals, budget, personnel, curriculum and instruction, and organizational structures.

State policymakers, district administrators, principals, and teachers alter their roles in schools to accommodate the changes from traditional educational processes and operations to SBM. State policymakers experience a shift away from the historical role as monitor of the educational processes to three major responsibilities: (a) assuming the lead role in establishing a new vision of education and translating that vision into desired student outcomes; (b) supporting efforts to empower parents and professional educators to nurture the evolution of new forms of governance and organization; and (c) holding schools and schools systems accountable for what they accomplish.

The purpose of the central office changes from monitoring and regulating to facilitating and serving schools. Experience with SBM shows that the central office structure may change by: (a) dividing into smaller regional units; (b) reducing size of staff; (c) reassigning employees to

support activities in individual schools; (d) transferring responsibilities to the school level; or (e) distributing centralized tasks over a larger number of people.

The principal's role is altered in three fundamental ways: (a) delegating leadership responsibilities and developing collaborative decision-making processes; (b) enabling and supporting teacher success through a democratic, participate, and consultative management style; and (c) extending the school community by exp ding their public relations activities with external constituents and working with the governing board and parents.

Teachers' work changes structurally and conceptually with SBM. Teachers take on expanded responsibility by participating in formal decision making and making school structures more flexible. Some teachers also fill new professional roles (i.e., teacher-facilitator or coordinator). The conceptual dimensions of teachers represent a significant shift in conventional ways of thinking about teachers. New dimensions include teacher as colleague, teacher as decision maker, teacher as leader, and teacher as learner.

Five conditions are necessary to facilitate SBM. Readiness is an important antecedent to successful implementation of SBM and is fostered by: (a) developing trust among the staff members; (b) developing a sense of direction or purpose that is widely communicated and internalized by all stakeholders; and (c) committing to take risks and to the right to fail.

Time is also important to successful implementation of SBM. Start-up time is needed to get SBM initiatives underway. In addition, the pool of available time needs to be expanded for learning new roles, and working with new constituents. Cooperative work time among teachers is also needed to develop a professional culture and common agenda for the school. Finally, an appropriate amount of time is required so that complex changes can unfold and begin to produce desired outcomes.

Professional development is a key for successful implementation of SBM initiatives. Professional development activities need to be integrated with the local SBM agenda. Further, professional development which includes capacity building activities (i.e., communication skills, group process, planning, and decision-making skills) are of critical importance in SBM.

Adequate material resources are also key for successful implementation of SBM. Policymakers at the state and district levels need to be attentive to issues of funding under SBM. Material assistance is most valuable when it is channeled into two important support areas: time and professional development. Although the amount of money cannot be adequately determined outside the context of specific reform initiatives, there are periods when infusions of additional material resources can exert a significant influence (e.g., start-up funds, professional development programs).

Finally, support from all educational stakeholders, from good working structures and from public legitimization are all necessary for the successful implementation of SBM. Superintendents act as gatekeepers for change at the district and school levels, offering their endorsements and willingness to commit valuable tangible and intangible organizational resources. Principals

are the catalysts for change at the school level as they support efforts to decentralize the governance and management of schools. Support also comes in the form of well-developed working structures. Structural principles include: (a) there is no universally appropriate working structure from site to site; (b) it is desirable to have overlap of personnel on the structures used for planning and implementing SBM; (c) a school-wide steering committee helps bring coherence to the overall SBM agenda; (d) a coordinator or facilitator can sharpen the focus of SBM activity; and (e) maintaining the stability of these working structures can greatly enhance their effectiveness. Support is also the regular acknowledgment of the work SBM schools are doing, which serves to legitimize labors. The most important types of legitimization are recognizing staff expertise and helping educators have access to and become intelligent consumers of research.

School-based management is a difficult initiative to get underway. New roles for teachers, parents, and students make the change process problematic. Analysts have found that participatory governance creates additional administrative burdens for teachers and for administrators often taking both groups further away from the central issue of schooling. However, SBM offers hope for improving certain dimensions of schools, such as local autonomy, diversity, responsiveness to individual students and community needs, and parent relations.

PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

During the mid-to-late 1980s, the educational reform movement that had commenced around 1980 began to change form and texture. Up to that time, reform initiatives were informed by the belief that schooling could be improved if standards were raised, more effective prescriptions and regulations written, and educators, from the boardroom to the classroom, asked to do more. As the prevailing assumptions underlying the excellence movement came under attack, a new belief system began to take root—one that would grow to support what has become known as the restructuring movement. Central to this perspective on school improvement are the following assumptions about reform: educational problems are attributable more to the failure of the system of schooling than to the shortcomings of individual educators; empowerment (of students, teachers, and parents) is a more effective tool than prescription; and bottom-up, school-based solution strategies will lead to more satisfying results than will top-down, mandated ones.

While subject to criticism for a perceived lack of conceptual clarity and definitional specificity, the school restructuring movement nonetheless—or perhaps because of this very ambiguity—began to flourish, becoming a clearing house for a wide assortment of improvement efforts. Chief among these are initiatives to: (1) expand opportunities for parents to play a more vital role in the education of their children, especially proposals to enhance parental voice and choice; (2) decentralize control over education from the state through the district to the individual school community; (3) professionalize teaching, both at the state and federal levels and at each individual school site; (4) replace the behavioral underpinnings of learning and teaching with constructivist principles; and (5) infuse more market sensitive measures of accountability into the schooling process, while de-emphasizing historically entrenched bureaucratic controls.

Of all the reform measures of this era, none has received as much attention as school-based management (SBM). Primarily a strategy to decentralize decision making authority to the individual school site, SBM can also facilitate the empowerment of parents and the professionalization of teachers. The purpose of this paper is to explore this improvement strategy in more detail. In the first section of the paper, SBM is defined, with particular detail given to key areas of educational decision making. In addition, a proposal is made for coupling SBM with powerful views of learning and teaching. The next two sections focus attention on making SBM work as an improvement strategy. The second part of the paper examines how the roles of key educational stakeholders—state policymakers, district office personnel, principals, and teachers—must change to make SBM a reality. The final section explores five conditions that nurture the successful implementation of SBM: readiness, time, professional development, resources, and support.

WHAT IS SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT?

The consistent aim which links the changes and proposals for change into a coherent policy shift is to dismantle much of the central administrative structure and hand over to individual schools responsibility for curriculum planning and, ultimately, for financial and personnel management. (Watt, 1989, p. 19)

Local Control and Shared Decision Making

School-based management has been characterized in a number of different ways. One of the most comprehensive definitions has been provided by Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz (1989).

> *School-based management can be viewed conceptually as a formal alteration of governance structures, as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvements might be stimulated and sustained. (p. 1)*

Devolution of authority is the fundamental concept in SBM. Under this system of governance, schools become deregulated from the district office. The basic message is one of expanded local control and influence, of schools being given greater responsibility for their own affairs. The strategy of improvement is bottom-up change. School-based management is thus primarily an alteration in organizational arrangements in school districts. Authority and influence pass from higher to lower levels of the organization. Structural changes often accompany this devolution of authority.

Concomitantly, SBM usually includes an internal redistribution of the authority decentralized to the local school site from the state and the district office. Increased influence at the local school site is shared with teachers, parents and other community members, and sometimes, students. Thus shared decision making among key stakeholders at the local level becomes a defining characteristic of SBM.

Domains of School-Based Management

Local control and shared decision making take on meaning as they play out in the real world of five educational operations: goals, budget, personnel, curriculum and instruction, and organizational structures. The more control a school exercises over each of these areas—and the more widely that control is dispersed—the more extensive the pattern of SBM.

Goals

Decentralization of authority provides schools with more control over the direction the organization will pursue. Both the goals and the strategies for reaching them are primarily determined at the site level. Equally important is the fact that the individual school exercises considerable discretion over the values upon which collective action is to be taken. This control helps each school develop a unique culture that is consistent with the needs of the community.

Budget

Control over the budget is at the heart of efforts to decentralize authority. Without the ability to allocate resources by local actors, the other dimensions of SBM lack force. Decentralized budgeting often means the allocation of funds to the school in a lump sum rather than for predetermined categories of expenditures (e.g., a certain amount for books, a certain amount for salaries). This allows the school, rather than the district, to determine how funds will be employed. The larger the ratio of lump sum funds to monies restricted by categories, the greater the amount of decentralization. The freedom to determine whether funds will be spent inside or outside the district represents another dimension of budgetary control. For example, in highly decentralized districts, schools can purchase needed professional development services either from the district's staff development unit or from

private contractors. The ability to roll over unspent money is the final element of site-based control of funds. In conventional accounting practice in school districts and often within states, fund balances revert to the central office or the state. When budget authority is fully decentralized schools are able to carry over budget surpluses.

Personnel

Closely connected to budgetary discretion is control over the defining of roles and the hiring and development of staff. In the least aggressive model of SBM, the allocation of teaching positions is determined at the district level. Within this constraint, and subject to state regulations, members of the local school community exercise nearly full control over filling these slots. Teachers are no longer sent to the school from the district office. Teachers and administrators interview candidates, make the final choice, and pass their selection back to the district. Under more nearly comprehensive models of local control, the allocation of professional positions is not predetermined. While schools are still free to select personnel, they also have the option of using funds budgeted for teachers for other purposes. For example, they can take money allocated for a teacher and use it to purchase books and materials or to hire two or three paraprofessionals. In the most advanced cases of decentralization, authority—either full or partial—for the employment of the principal is held by teachers and/or members of the local school community.

Curriculum and Instruction

"Within a school-based management system, the school site has near total authority over curriculum matters. Within broad outlines defined by the board [and the state], the individual schools are free to teach in any manner they see fit" (Lindelow, 1981, p. 122). School-based curriculum means that each school staff decides what teaching materials as well as the specific pedagogical techniques that are to be used. It also means that the principal and teachers at the local level determine their own professional development needs and contract with whomever they wish to meet those needs.

Organizational Structures

Structures within which the educational process unfolds represent a final area of control for teachers, administrators, and parents under SBM. These groups are free to alter the basic delivery structure in schools, to develop alternatives to the model of the individual teacher working with groups of 25 to 35 students in 50-minute time blocks. At the elementary level, schools are creating educational programs that dramatically change the practices of grouping children by age for classes and by ability for instruction. At the secondary level, a number of decentralized schools are experimenting with alternative programs, core curricula, and outcome-based education.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER ROLES

All stakeholders will need to develop a clear, broader concept of their future roles in order to overcome persisting attitudes, and loyalties to previous traditions, styles and routines of a hierarchical, centralized school system. (Burke, 1992, p. 44)

State Policymakers

In this era of restructuring, the roles of state policymakers as well as the perspectives they bring to school improvement look significantly different than in the past. (Murphy, 1990, p. 14)

Under SBM, analysts discern a shift away from the state's historical role as monitor of the educational process. In its stead, a new tripartite set of responsibilities is emerging. First, state actors tend to assume the lead role in working with all stakeholders in the educational process to establish a new vision of education and to translate that vision into desired student outcomes. Second, they try to support--through as wide an array of methods as possible--efforts at the district, school, and classroom levels to empower parents and professional educators and to nurture the evolution of new forms of governance and organization. Third, they hold schools and school systems accountable for what they accomplish. Operating in this fashion, state policy actors are less involved in the micro-level management of the educational enterprise. Instead, they play a key role in charting the course and in assessing the results rather than in monitoring processes or effort. Parents, professional educators, and students in each school in turn become freer to direct their own destinies.

What is particularly important here is that state policymakers send fewer, clearer, and more consistent messages to schools engaged in SBM. For example, schools are often befuddled when, in the midst of implementing SBM, the state mandates a new curriculum or statewide assessment system. It is also important that state policymakers model expectations for teachers, principals, and parents at the local school. Because, by definition, SBM promotes variety, actors at the state (and district) level must be prepared to accept the fact that schools will look different from each other. Finally, policymakers need to ensure that systems that support LEAs--for example, teacher and administrative training--are brought into alignment with the underlying principles of SBM.

In a 1990 article in *Education Week*, Jane Armstrong of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) summarized the comments of more than three hundred participants from two workshops sponsored by the ECS and the National Governors' Association. She listed thirteen steps that policymakers can take to facilitate school restructuring initiatives such as SBM:

1. Develop a vision of desired student outcomes and a vision of a restructured education system.
2. Build a coalition of business, community, education, and political leaders.
3. Gain public and political support.
4. Provide flexibility, encourage experimentation, and decentralize decision-making.
5. Shift state and local education agency roles from enforcement to assistance.
6. Restructure teacher and administrator education.
7. Provide ongoing development opportunities for every teacher and administrator.
8. Hold the system accountable.
9. Give all students every chance to learn and contribute.
10. Use policies as catalysts to promote and support restructuring.
11. Identify pilot restructuring sites.
12. Reallocate existing resources for restructuring.
13. Use technology to support restructuring.

A similar set of "state actions to launch restructuring" has been described by Jane David and her colleagues in the National Governors' Association's 1990 report, *State Actions to Restructure Schools: First Steps*. They recommend that policymakers promote a vision, spread the word, build statewide support for restructuring, invite school and district participation, provide

support (flexibility, time, and assistance), shift the state role (away from compliance and toward objectives, assistance, and outcomes), focus on results, and maintain visibility. In addition, unlike the reforms of the early 1980s, they remind us that

> *for each state, the beginning steps of restructuring are exploratory. This is uncharted territory with no road maps. Inside schools, districts, and state agencies, leaders and educators are learning by experimenting. (David, 1990, p. 35)*

District Office

> *Under school-based management. . . the central office role . . . shifts from that of "telling" to "facilitating" individual school action. (Sackney & Dibski, 1992, p. 6)*

Efforts are underway in a variety of communities to overhaul district operations to support school-based reform efforts. Reports from these districts reveal shifts in the purpose, structure, and nature of the work of central offices.

Purpose

The main purpose of the district office becomes one of serving and facilitating local school success. In meeting this new objective in restructuring districts, as Hirsh and Sparks (1991) state, "central office departments are shifting from monitoring and regulating agencies to service centers for schools (p. 16)."

Structure

Consistent with their newly emerging mission, central offices in SBM districts are undergoing four types of structural change. In some cases, most often in large, heavily centralized districts, there has been a dismantling of the larger bureaucracy into regional units. For example, in the late 1980s the superintendent of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin schools decentralized the school system by dividing the bureaucracy into six service delivery areas. Parallel changes have been made in Dade County, Florida; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Dallas, Texas.

A reduction in size of central office staff is a second type of structural change sometimes found in SBM districts, often accompanied by the elimination of entire layers of the central hierarchy. For example, the first year of the Chicago Reform Act (1988-1989) saw a 20 percent reduction in central office staff, from 3300 positions to 2660 positions. In Dallas, two layers of the bureaucracy were removed when one deputy superintendent replaced two associate superintendents and the assistant superintendents for elementary and secondary education. In Cincinnati, the number of central office administrators dropped from 127 to 62. In addition, 27 non-administrative support-staff positions were eliminated, as were 50 clerical jobs.

Employees who previously occupied middle-management roles at the district office are sometimes reassigned to support activities in individual schools. In other cases, the money used to fund these positions is freed up to support new initiatives at the site level. In Chicago, the shift in central office staff generated $40 million, which was directed to the schools. The streamlining of staff in Cincinnati is expected to save $16 million over the 1992-1993 and 1993-1994 school years, all of which is targeted to flow directly to schools. In addition, many of the former Cincinnati central office administrators who do not retire will move to positions at the school level.

Finally, as this flattening of the hierarchical structure occurs, responsibilities and tasks historically housed at the district office level are often transferred to schools and responsibilities

that are currently centralized are distributed over a larger number of people. Consistent with the shifting purpose discussed earlier, the job of middle level managers becomes centered on providing services directly to schools.

Nature of the Work

What empirical evidence do we have about the nature of the work being performed by district office personnel in SBM districts? There is evidence that the most prominent feature of change in the nature of central office work is away from "traditional roles of director, controller, and monitor to enabler, facilitator, and helper" (Mojkowski & Bamberger, 1991, p. 51). Consistent with the redefined purpose of district activity discussed earlier, some central office departments are becoming service centers for schools. In helping support school-based reform, the function of central office personnel changes from attempting to ensure uniformity across schools to "orchestrat[ing] diversity to ensure that the common educational goals of the system are met, even if in many different ways" (Schneider, cited in Clinchy, 1989)--a change that one superintendent we worked with describes as moving from managing a school system to developing a system of schools.

Central office personnel in restructuring districts are spending less time initiating projects. They are serving as liaisons between the school community and district office, performing as brokers of central-office services. In the sample of decentralizing districts in Kentucky, the central office facilitative role has meant less emphasis on telling, more advisory work and consultation, additional legwork in securing information for schools, and becoming more of a transmitter of information rather than a developer of strategies. In Riverside, California, decentralization "as it involved central office changed communications patterns inside and outside the office to one of listening; changed decision-making to consensus; [and] changed workstyle to facilitation" (Wissler & Ortiz, 1988, pp. 94-95). In a third district in the Midwest, SBM caused central administrators to begin managing and leading in more of a partnership arrangement with teachers, rather than as initiators or directors.

For many employees there is a sense of loss associated with decentralization, which is rooted in a diminished perception of authority, influence, power, and status, as well as in a perceived distance in the relationship between central office personnel and school staff. Consequently, many district employees have a particularly difficult time adapting to decentralization.

Principal

> *In order to survive in such a decentralized environment, principals will have to exhibit different skills and behaviors than is now the case. (Guthrie, 1992, p. 28)*

Largely because new legislation and other externally generated expectations have altered the context of education, principals in most SBM environments believe that their roles have been altered in fundamental ways. We group these changes under the following three headings: leading from the center, enabling and supporting teacher success, and extending the school community.

Leading from the Center

There is considerable evidence that principals who are taking the SBM agenda seriously are struggling--often against long odds and often with only mixed success--to redefine their leadership role. For example, in their study Earley and his colleagues (1990) report that "[a]pproximately two thirds of the cohort believed they had become more consultative, more open and more democratic. Heads spoke of becoming increasingly aware of the need for

more participative management and for staff ownership of change" (p. 9). Nearly all the work in this area concludes that the attempt to reshape power relationships--to redistribute authority to teachers, parents, and occasionally students--is at the very core of this redefinition. Two tasks form the foundation of these redesigned power relationships--delegating authority and developing collaborative decision-making processes.

Delegating leadership responsibilities. On the first issue, delegation of authority, initial studies convey both the importance and difficulty of sharing power. First, they affirm that empowering others represents the biggest change and poses the most significant problems for principals. Second, they impart a sense of how hard it can be for the organization and the community to permit the principal to let go. Existing routines, norms, and expectations are often solidly entrenched. Attempts to delegate control, on the other hand, are often quite fragile. Third, these studies underscore the centrality of a trusting relationship between the principal and the teachers in making genuine delegation a possibility. Fourth, they reveal that only by learning to delegate can principals in SBM reform efforts be successful. Finally, work on the evolving role of school leaders under decentralization indicates that, even given the great difficulties involved, principals do have an array of available skills and tools that are effective in moving away from hierarchical control and in empowering teachers to lead.

Developing collaborative decision making processes. Principals in decentralized schools spend considerable energy creating alternatives to traditional decision making structures and forging a role for themselves consistent with the recast authority relationships that define these structures. Certainly the most prevalent change here is the principal's role in the development of a variety of formal models of site based decision making. In addition, to foster the development of professional school cultures, principals in some of these schools are taking a stronger role supporting the development of powerful informal networks.

Enabling and Supporting Teacher Success

Foundation. Enabling and supporting teacher success encompasses a variety of functions. What appears to be as critical as the functions themselves are the bases for the activities and the ways in which they are performed. To the extent that there is an emerging empirical picture of principal leadership in decentralized schools, it seems to be one that is grounded not so much on line authority as it is "based on mutual respect and equality of contribution and commitment" (Prestine, 1991, p. 27). It reflects a style of management that is democratic, participative, and consultative. Group-centered leadership behaviors are often crucial. The ability to orchestrate from the background is often paramount.

Functions. This foundation provides the context for a set of five functions often performed by principals in schools emphasizing shared decision making: (1) helping formulate a shared vision; (2) cultivating a network of relationships; (3) allocating resources consistent with the vision; (4) providing information to staff; and (5) promoting teacher development. Bounding all of these functions are efforts of principals to support and affirm teachers' leadership and to create the framework for teachers to enhance their own growth and expand their own roles.

Extending the School Community

Reports from nearly all sectors of the decentralization movement confirm that: (1) the boundaries between schools and their communities are becoming more permeable; (2) environmental leadership is becoming more important; and

(3) principals are spending more time with parents and other members of the school than they have in the past.

Promoting the school. Perhaps the most dramatic shift for the principals in schools engaged in SBM reform efforts has been their need to expand the public relations activities with external constituents. In this new context, the entrepreneurial role of the principal is enhanced. In nearly all SBM sites, there is a renewed interest on the importance of client perceptions of schools and a new emphasis on obtaining and retaining students. In short, because the public image of schools becomes a much more salient issue under SBM, more and more time of principals in decentralized schools is being directed toward public relations and the promotion of the school's image and to selling and marketing the school and its programs to the community.

Working with the governing board and parents. Investigations of SBM portray a picture of principals who are heavily involved in work with governing boards--boards that in many cases came into existence as part of the SBM agenda. While such "direct participation of parents [has] made parental beliefs, values, and perceptions more central in the lives of professional educators" (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993, p. 138), it also represents opportunity costs for principals. Principals sometimes argue that educating the school council can be a full-time job. There are also hints that principals in SBM schools extend the school community by working more directly with parents and justifying school processes and outcomes to community members.

Teachers

Analysts concerned with the role of teachers envision significant changes in the work they perform in decentralized schools. These alterations cluster into two categories: structural and conceptual changes.

Structural Redesign

Expanded responsibilities. At one level, teachers under SBM are taking on new responsibilities. They are assuming control over decisions that were historically the province of others, especially administrators. Changes in this area are of two types--"those that increase teachers' right to participate in formal decision making [and] those that give teachers greater access to influence by making school structures more flexible" (Moore-Johnson, 1989, p. 2). Numerous examples of expanded teacher responsibilities are available from school districts that are engaged in SBM efforts.

Team approaches to school management and governance are particularly good collective examples of expanded responsibilities for teachers. For example, in the Cincinnati, Ohio school system, an equal number of teachers and administrators now comprise the committee that determines the allocation of teachers to individual schools. The formalization of teacher participation in decision-making forums from which they were previously excluded (e.g., principal and teacher selection committees, facility planning groups) has been accomplished in Dade County, Florida; Hammond, Indiana; and other districts employing school-based models of management. Through expanded participation in collective decision-making models and professional support groups, teachers in schools emphasizing shared decision making have also begun to exercise considerable influence over the type of evaluation procedures employed. Individual teachers sometimes assume greater responsibil-

ity for the mentoring and supervision of their peers--especially beginning teachers--evaluating the work of principals, providing professional development to their colleagues, and developing curricula for the school. In short, both individually and collectively, teachers in decentralized schools are accumulating new responsibilities that extend their role beyond the confines of their own classrooms.

New professional roles. Some teachers in SBM schools are not only adding new responsibilities to their current jobs but are also beginning to fill new professional roles--work redesign activities that may significantly alter the basic role itself. For example, a master teacher may continue to work three or four days a week in his or her own classroom but may also spend one or two days working with colleagues in their classrooms or with peers developing student assessment materials. A teacher-facilitator or coordinator may actually leave the classroom for a semester or a year to create professional development activities or curriculum materials for peers.

Conceptual Redesign

In trying to understand the conceptual core of restructured teacher work in decentralized schools, the classification system developed by McCarthey and Peterson (1989) is helpful. According to these analysts, the categories of teacher as colleague, teacher as decision maker, teacher as leader, and teacher as learner capture the essence of the new roles for teachers in decentralized schools. In addition, a number of analysts have emphasized the idea of teacher as generalist. Each of these conceptual dimensions represents a significant shift in conventional ways of thinking about teachers. In conventional practice, teachers are entrepreneurs of their own classrooms. They orchestrate their own operations almost totally independently of their peers and engage in few leadership or decision-making activities outside their own cubicles. They are viewed as pedagogical specialists whose function it is to deliver educational services to their young charges. Little time and energy are available for or devoted to self-renewal and professional growth.

Analysts sketch a very different portrait of the teaching function under SBM. According to them, teachers are professionals who engage in regular and important exchanges with their colleagues. Teachers participate in decisions affecting the entire school and frequently perform leadership tasks. They understand that to perform in this fashion they need to be more collegial, to develop more interdependence with peers, and to share their knowledge with others in a variety of settings. They realize that by engaging in learning themselves they "are more likely to facilitate in their students the kind of learning that will be needed in the next decade" (McCarthey & Peterson, 1989, p. 11).

CONDITIONS TO FACILITATE SBM

The "leap from report to reality" is an arduous one at many levels. (Sabatini, 1993, p. 3)

Readiness

Shared decision making yields many dividends in its mature stages. A key problem is getting there. (Weiss, Cambone, & Wyeth, 1992, p. 363)

Trust

This first set of enabling conditions is designed to foster the development of an organizational culture that will support SBM. Readiness is an important antecedent to the successful implementation of SBM. Not everyone will be comfortable with SBM. Some in fact will be

quite skeptical of what they are likely to perceive as another round of lofty pronouncements, flurries of activity, and marginal improvements. The likelihood of personal loss, especially for those who currently control school systems, will be feared by others. Some will be concerned by the potential of SBM to aggravate existing tensions in the system. A number of students of SBM have concluded that trust is a bedrock condition for change. One major strategy for nurturing this sense of trust is to focus on the interpersonal dimensions--rather than the technical aspects--of change. Other guidelines extracted from current decentralization efforts include: helping people clearly see the advantages of change; recognizing and accepting resistance; allaying concerns and fears about the unknown; and developing strong working relationships among groups. The lesson for schools engaged in shared decision making is that the development of trust must be addressed directly, often, and regularly, especially in forums that strengthen personal relationships among staff members.

Direction

Readiness also includes a sense of direction, or purpose, that is widely communicated and internalized by all stakeholders in the change process. It appears especially necessary to create what one might call "a sense of the possibilities," i.e., a belief that something different is possible along with some conception about what those potentialities are. The idea of a school is so well grounded in the minds of educators and parents that, when provided meaningful opportunities for change, they are often at a loss about what to do. Teachers and administrators carry emotional baggage that predisposes them to act in certain ways. A good deal of organizational sediment reinforces the status quo, making it difficult to see different ways of organizing and acting. Schools have operated within such a confining web of externally imposed rules and regulations for so long that, even when they are removed, it is hard to imagine how things might be different. For all of these reasons, a sense of direction must be forged on the anvil of dreams and possibilities of what schooling might become. Systematic efforts--through readings, discussions, and visits to other schools--to expand people's view of what can be done will facilitate the development of a sense of direction for restructuring schools.

The development of a sense of the possibilities is the first step in establishing direction for SBM efforts. The creation of a large scale plan of operation is the second. In effect, a long-term plan of operations is needed that captures possibilities in ways that allow people to direct their energies and assess their progress. Plans to implement SBM efforts work best when they: (1) clearly delineate the new roles and responsibilities everyone must fulfill in support of the plan; (2) focus on teaching and learning; (3) address the entire system, i.e., are integrative and systemic in nature; and (4) reach the routine daily activities of the school and classroom.

Risk

Finally, readiness entails a commitment to take risks and to the right to fail, conditions not normally a part of the culture of schools. Willingness to take risks in turn is composed of at least three ingredients--the sense of the possibilities noted above, incentives to change, and strong organizational support.

Time

A clear and unequivocal message from the Bridgetown experience was the need to develop strategies for rescheduling time. Extra time was needed to plan together, work out new relationships, establish goals and objectives, undertake new projects and develop new skills. Sustaining this effort in the face of the

constant pressure of time was a significant concern. (Wallace & Wildy, 1993, p. 15)

Analysts regularly emphasize the importance of time in implementing SBM. Four aspects of this implementation issue receive a good deal of scrutiny. To begin with, reformers argue, time is needed to get SBM initiatives under way; they should be phased in slowly. Districts often begin with pilot projects and volunteer schools before extending shared decision making efforts more generally. A yearlong planning process--with time for lengthy discussion and analysis--seems a desirable goal.

A second time-related theme is that the pool of available time needs to be expanded. Time is needed for learning new roles, personalizing schooling, and working with new constituents. Case studies on SBM initiatives suggest that time can be expanded by adding to the total time pool available (e.g., providing time for retreats before the school year begins) and/or by reconfiguring the school day or teacher tasks to reduce the load on staff (e.g., providing an extra preparation period, grouping students differently to provide development time for teachers).

A third dimension of time illustrated in reviews of SBM schools is cooperative work time. "Teachers must have time that is expressly allocated to the development of common agenda for the school and in which the development of professional culture and trusting personal relationships can occur" (Louis & King, 1993, p. 244). Various analysts provide guidance for how expanded time for planning and work should be spent by teachers working collaboratively. Specific examples include: common planning times for same-grade-level or team-based teachers; work sessions and retreats for teachers, administrators, and parents to assess school operations; regularly scheduled, cooperatively oriented professional development activities.

Finally, there is the issue of an appropriate amount of time required for results, the need to develop a time frame that is sufficient to ensure that complex changes can unfold and begin to produce desired outcomes. Districts that have been successful in empowering professionals and in decentralizing operations have often taken 5 to 10 years to do so.

Professional Development

Many of the staff members of [SBM] school teams have little or no prior experience in running their schools. They . . . recognized their need for access to information and training that would enable them to fulfill their new roles. (Jewell & Rosen, 1993, p. 10)

Undertaking new roles and working in schools that are organized and managed in different ways represent immense new challenges to educators and community members. It is not surprising, therefore, that nearly every analyst identifies professional development as a key variable in the formula for successful implementation of SBM initiatives.

Integrating Activities

Efforts need to be made to ensure that professional development activities are integrated with the local reform agenda rather than remaining a freestanding set of activities. Reviewers also note that professional development is effective to the extent that it centers on opportunities for staff members to work collaboratively and on an ongoing basis. Recent work helps extend the definition of professional development appropriate for SBM--from passive consumer behavior to active participation in school-based research and substantive dialogue; and from an individual activity to a collaborative endeavor.

Capacity Building

Case studies of SBM paint a picture of school communities that are unprepared to engage in the active, collaborative task of shared decision making and that are unfamiliar and uneasy with the new roles that this work entails. They direct attention to the importance of capacity building across an array of interrelated process areas. Since SBM increases uncertainty, helping school staffs learn to deal with stress becomes important. Also, because increased cooperation enhances the potential for conflict, skills in conflict management are in great demand in schools engaged in shared decision making.

Under SBM, a premium is placed on communication, yet many educators do not demonstrate good communication skills. Other collaborative skills--group process, planning, and decision-making--are also of critical importance in SBM. Reviewers report that staff members are often ill-prepared for interactive work with other adults. For example, Louis and King (1993) found that teachers in their study "were consumed with the immediate crises of lurching from day to day" (p. 228) and that their group process skills were poor, "resulting in a great deal of wasted time in staff meetings" (p. 229). In addition, work in the area of SBM demonstrates that most teachers have not received training in leadership and are therefore poorly prepared to exercise such responsibility outside of their own classrooms. Training in all these skill areas is needed if SBM efforts are to be given a chance.

Collaborative Inquiry

Dexterity in collaborative inquiry--a combination of personal reflection and organizational analysis--is conspicuous by its absence among many teachers and administrators. The tools needed to operate as a learning organization will not magically appear at schools engaged in SBM activities. The potential for confusion and mistrust is large. Without training in the process skills discussed above, there is little reason to assume that SBM initiatives will succeed.

Resources

Resources required for change take a variety of forms. One that has received considerable scrutiny in the school improvement literature over the years has been that of material resources. In the area of SBM, the primary message is that such assistance is most valuable when it is channeled into two other important support areas--time and professional development.

A second lesson concerning material resources is that, while additional funding can be of real assistance, it is not imperative. The question of how much money--usually expressed in terms of additional funding--is desirable is still open and is likely never to be answered outside the context of specific reform initiatives.

There are periods in the life cycle of SBM initiatives when infusions of additional material resources can exert a significant influence. For example, start-up funds, even small amounts, are of critical importance. Other influential life cycle periods are more contextualized, such as securing a grant to facilitate the development of conflict resolution skills at one school and problem framing skills at another. Analyses also demonstrate that the amount of total support is less significant than the ability of the school to map resources onto the school vision and plan.

The general message in this area is twofold. Policymakers at the state and district levels need to be attentive to issues of funding under SBM. Given that the real costs of staff development and time are left out of discussions of additional funding, these stakeholders should be leery of claims that restructuring education is largely a budget-neutral proposition. At the same time, studies show that even small amounts of addi-

tional resources that are well integrated with a school's vision can have dramatic effects on the structure and process of schooling.

Support

> *It would appear that not only is strong advocacy by the superintendent needed, but also a similar level of commitment by the building principal. (Lindquist & Muriel, 1989, p. 412)*

Superintendent

If attempts to implement SBM are to be successful, a school system will need a good deal of patience, wisdom, and trust; and considerable support and direction from all educational stakeholders, especially formal school leaders. Students of SBM are reaffirming a lesson learned in earlier studies of school improvement: the superintendent is often the sustaining force in change efforts. Superintendents, even in decentralized systems, act as gatekeepers for change at the district and school levels. Without their endorsement and support, their willingness to commit valuable tangible and intangible organizational resources, the seeds of decentralization are likely to fall on barren ground. On the other hand, in districts where shared decision making is occurring, there is invariably a superintendent who endorses the concept.

The superintendent in his or her gatekeeping role can quickly legitimize, or call into question, reform efforts. Affirmation that SBM schools can act differently than other schools and/or outside the standard district policy and regulatory framework seems to be critical. Superintendents are also ideally positioned to provide political support and protection to schools engaged in SBM efforts. Because others inside and outside of the school system often take their lead from the superintendent, the presence (or absence) of visible support is likely both to color how others view this reform experiment and to determine whether they, in turn, act in a supportive, neutral, or hostile manner. Finally, superintendents are in a unique position to ensure that sufficient tangible resources flow to restructuring schools. They do this in a general way by signaling--or by not signaling--that special projects require special funding at times. They do it in more specific ways by helping schools secure resources for SBM activities at the school level.

Principal

A number of analysts have noted the capacity of principals to significantly hamper district efforts to decentralize the governance and management of schools. Others have described principals' ability to squelch restructuring initiatives bubbling up from the teaching core. And, as discussed in detail earlier, almost all reviewers find supportive principals in the vanguard of successful SBM efforts.

Working Structures

As Hallinger and Hausman (1993) remind us, "If important decisions about educational programs [are] to be decentralized to the school level, there needs to be a structure and process in place . . . to ensure that these decisions [are] made in a participatory manner," (p. 139) and to ensure that the complex work of shared decision making is conscientiously addressed. Well-developed working structures represent an important support mechanism in all cases where SBM is progressing favorably. The subthemes in this area are as follows: (a) there is no universally appropriate working structure; what is required or useful at one site may be unnecessary at another; (b) it is desirable to have extensive overlap of personnel on the structures used for planning and for implementing SBM; (c) some type of schoolwide steering committee (e.g., a School Leadership Council) helps bring coher-

ence to the overall SBM agenda; (d) the use of a coordinator or facilitator can significantly sharpen the focus of SBM activities while reducing reliance on formal administrative channels; and (e) maintaining the stability of these working structures can greatly enhance their effectiveness.

Legitimization

A final form of support often enjoyed by SBM schools is regular acknowledgment for the work they are doing, a legitimization of their labors. In most cases, a reasonable level of external affirmation bolsters locally based reform initiatives. Types of legitimization vary across the sites. The most important are those that recognize staff expertise and those that help educators have access to and become intelligent consumers of research.

Four general categories of external acknowledgment are discernible in studies on SBM: recognition and visibility from the media; participation in forums where teachers share what they are learning with others in formal presentations; opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools; and acting as a learning laboratory for educators from other schools. Internally, legitimization comes to individuals when site-based peers begin to look to them for expertise and when managing the SBM process taps hidden strengths and talents.

Summary

Over the last few years a number of things have been learned (and relearned) about the implementation of SBM. First, it is a difficult intervention to get underway. Sharp differences of opinion at the school level about new roles for teachers, parents, and students under SBM often make the change process problematic (Gips & Wilkes, 1993; Smith, 1993). Most studies in this area underscore "the recurring problem of drawing all team members into equal partnership in school-based management/shared decision-making" (Jewell & Rosen, 1993, p. 9). "Power transformation through collaborative decision making requires more than will. It requires continuing negotiation, skill, and knowledge to make institutional change and . . . we are unschooled in ways to do this" (Sabatini, 1993, p. 8). What reviewers often find "is that the traditional, rational bureaucratic organization may still be well and active even though structural changes have taken place" (Sackney & Dibski, 1992, p. 5).

Second, there is a downside to SBM. Specifically, a number of analysts have found that "participatory governance creates additional administrative burdens for teachers" (Wong, 1993, p. 15) and administrators (Murphy, 1994), often taking both groups further away from the central issue of schooling—learning and teaching.

Third, SBM offers hope for improving certain dimensions of schooling. For example, in their review Sackney and Dibski (1992) conclude that "SBM facilitates local autonomy, diversity, and responsiveness to individual student and community needs" (p. 15). Wong (1993), in turn, finds that "new governing structures can improve social relations among low-income minority parents, teachers, and pupils by creating a climate of trust and understanding that fosters staff morale and student aspirations and enhances parental support for teacher's work" (p. 2).

Finally, and most importantly, as we have discussed in detail elsewhere (Murphy, 1991), it appears that SBM in and of itself does not lead to improvement in student learning.

> *[T]here is little or no evidence that [site-based management] has any direct or predictable relationship to changes in instruction and students' learning. In fact, the evidence suggests that the implementation of site-based management reforms has a more or less random relationship to changes in curriculum, teaching, and students' learning. (Elmore, 1993, p. 40)*

Given this fundamental problem and the difficulties noted above, a number of thoughtful analysts have asked whether "[p]erhaps there are more productive ways to spend the 'reform energy' that is loose in the land" (Weiss, et al., 1992, p. 365). Although the author shares this concern, reading of the reform literature leads to the conclusion that what is needed is a marriage between SBM and our most powerful conceptions of learning and teaching. Specifically, "revisions in organizational and governance structures should be more tightly linked to revisions in curriculum and instruction. Reforms should 'backward map' from the student" (Murphy, 1991, p. 74). Stated alternatively, SBM should "'wrap around' the core technology" (Murphy & Hallinger, 1993, p. 255).

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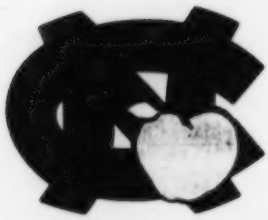
Introducing the Center

The North Carolina Educational Policy Research Center was established in 1991 through a contract to the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from the State Board of Education. The mission of the Center is to strengthen the information base for educational policy decisions in North Carolina to enhance outcomes of schooling for children. The Center seeks to accomplish this mission by:

- conducting policy research and analyses;
- preparing research reports examining broad policy issues, policy briefs providing concise information about specific issues, and quarterly newsletters;
- disseminating research-based information on educational policy issues to North Carolina policymakers, educators and community leaders;
- providing a forum for the discussion of educational policy issues; and,
- training future educational leaders in the conduct and use of policy research.



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